

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

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P R 092025Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9308

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA PRIORITY

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 4116

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

DX

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, ES, PGOV

SUBJECT: HONDURAS-EL SALVADOR DISPUTE

1. SUMMARY: AT PRESIDENT MOLINA'S INVITATION, I CALLED ON HIM OCTOBER 8 ACCOMPANIED BY DCM. IN ENSUING ONE-HOUR CONVERSATION, MOLINA TOUCHED ON SEVERAL FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC ISSUES WHICH WILL BE REPORTED SEPARATELY. IN THIS CABLE, I WILL COVER ONLY THE SUBJECT MATTER. ON THE BASIS OF MOLINA'S PRELIMINARY UNENTHUSIASTIC REACTION TO RECENT HONDURAN INITIATIVE BEFORE OAS COMMITTEE OF SEVEN, I WOULD JUDGE THAT PROSPECTS ARE NOT GOOD THAT IT OFFERS A HOPEFUL PATH TOWARD NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THESE TWO DISPUTANTS. END SUMMARY.

2. MOLINA GAVE ME A BRIEF RUN-DOWN OF THE STATUS OF SALVADORAN-HONDURAN EFFORTS AT NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS SINCE OUR LAST DISCUSSION (SEE SAN SALVADOR 2858). HE REITERATED THAT AT THE "LA GLORIA" MEETING IN COSTA RICA LAST JULY HE AND HONDURAN CHIEF OF STATE MELGAR HAD AGREED TO MAKE AN ATTEMPT AT DIRECT, CONFIDENTIAL

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BILATERAL, INFORMAL AND UNPUBLICIZED NEGOTIATIONS AT SETTLEMENT

OF THE KIND ATTEMPTED WITH MELGAR'S PREDECESSOR, LOPEZ ARELLANO. HE COULD REPORT NO PROGRESS IN EFFORTS TO CONTACT MELGAR BY PHONE SINCE JULY. HE RELATED HIS MOST RECENT EXPERIENCE WHEN HE ATTEMPTED TO CALL MELGAR AT THE TIME OF ARRIVAL IN EL SALVADOR ON AUGUST 28 OF THE LAST INCREMENT OF ISRAELI JETS TO GIVE HIM DIRECT NOTIFICATION OF WHAT HAD ARRIVED AS WAS MOLINA'S CUSTOM WITH LOPEZ ARELLANO AND VICE VERSA REGARDING AIRCRAFT PROCUREMENT. MELGAR FAILED TO RESPOND TO THAT CALL. MOLINA MADE ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO REACH MELGAR FIVE DAYS LATER BUT WAS AGAIN UNSUCCESSFUL. HE HAS NOT CALLED MELGAR SINCE AND PRESUMED THAT THE LATTER WAS AS PREOCCUPIED WITH DOMESTIC PROBLEMS, AS HE HIMSELF HAS BEEN, AND HADN'T FOUND TIME TO FOCUS ON THE ISSUES WITH EL SALVADOR.

3. MOLINA SAID THAT HE WAS PUZZLED BY THE RECENT INITIATIVE OF THE GOH BEFORE THE OAS COMMITTEE OF SEVEN IN LIGHT OF HIS AND MELGAR'S AGREEMENT TO TRY TO MOVE AHEAD ON A DIRECT BILATERAL BASIS WITHOUT RECOURSE TO INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. HE CONFIRMED THAT THE GOES HAD NOT YET RECEIVED ANY FORMAL COMMUNICATION ON THE MATTER FROM THE OAS BUT HAD OBTAINED A COPY OF THE LENGTHY GLAVEZ PROPOSAL AND HAD SUBMITTED IT FOR STUDY TO THE INTRA-GOVERNMENTAL TECHNICAL COMMISSION UNDER FOREIGN MINISTRY CHAIRMANSHIP. ON THE BASIS OF HIS PRELIMINARY KNOWLEDGE, HE THOUGHT GALVEZ'S PROPOSAL SEEMED TO BE A RETURN TO THE FORMAL, PUBLICIZED NEGOTIATION OF THE KIND THAT TOOK PLACE IN MEXICO IN LATE 1973 AND RESULTED IN A STALEMATE. ASIDE FROM THE INORDINATE EXPENSE (THE LAST ROUND COST GOES \$80,000) WHICH HIS GOVERNMENT COULD ILL AFFORD, THE PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE DID NOT OFFER ENCOURAGING PROSPECTS FOR ACHIEVING MUTUALLY SATISFACTORY SETTLEMENT BY THIS LENGTHY AND CUMBERSOME MEANS AT THIS JUNCTURE.

4. HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHY THE GOH HAD TAKEN THIS STEP WHICH SEEMED TO CONTRADICT THE "LA FLOR" COMMITMENT, AND HE WAS CHAGRINED THAT THE GOH HAD MADE NO EFFORT TO COMMUNICATE ITS PURPOSE TO THE GOES IN ADVANCE OF GALVEZ'S OAS INITIATIVE. HE COULD ONLY PRESUME THAT MELGAR WAS COMPELLED BY DOMESTIC HONDURAN CONSIDERATIONS TO RESORT TO RECOURSE TO THE OAS; AND, AS A NATIONAL LEADER HIMSELF, MOLINA SAID THAT HE COULD APPRECIATE MELGAR'S DIFFICULTIES.

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5. FINALLY, MOLINA CONFIRMED THAT THERE WILL BE A CENTRAL AMERICAN CHIEF'S OF STATE MEETING ON OCTOBER 31 IN GUATEMALA DURING WHICH TIME HE INTENDED TO SPEAK TO MELGAR PRIVATELY IN ORDER TO ASCERTAIN HONDURAN INTENTIONS AND DETERMINE WHAT MEANINGFUL MEASURES THE TWO GOVERNMENTS COULD TAKE TO SETTLE THEIR DIFFERENCES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

6. COMMENT: IT DOES NOT APPEAR LIKELY THAT THE GOES WILL UNDERTAKE ANY KIND OF RESPONSE TO A FORMAL GESTURE BY THE OAS COMMITTEE OF SEVEN ON GALVEZ'S PROPOSAL BEFORE THE PROJECTED SUMMIT MEETING IN GUATEMALA AT WHICH MOLINA HOPES TO DETERMINE HONDURAN INTENTIONS. IN ADDITION TO THE REASONS GIVEN BY MOLINA, WITH SALVADORAN ELECTIONS IN THE NEAR OFFING, IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT THE GOES IS NOT AT ALL ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE PROSPECTS OF RENEWING FORMAL NEGOTIATION OF THE BOUNDARY DISPUTE, A VERY SENSITIVE POLITICAL ISSUE IN EL SALVADOR AS MOLINA DISCOVERED IN LATE 1973 WHEN A STRONG ADVERSE REACTION DEVELOPED DOMESTICALLY TO THE PREVIOUS EFFORT.

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